

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the House leadership has agreed to bring to the floor this week the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006. I want to thank the Speaker and the majority leader for their willingness to go forward with this debate prior to our upcoming recess.

Madam Speaker, the 1965 Voting Rights Act changed America. It created the opportunity for minority citizens to fully participate in democracy. Prior to the enactment and enforcement of the act, black citizens in the South were disenfranchised, primarily because of the literacy tests and because of the design of election systems that submerged concentrations of black voters into large, majority-white election districts. The result was that African-American communities could not elect candidates of their choice to office.

Why? It was because black voters did not comprise sufficient numbers within the district and white voters refused to vote for candidates who were the choice of the minority community. And so the votes of black citizens were diluted, which is a clear violation of the principle of one-person, one-vote.

The Voting Rights Act permits minority citizens to bring Federal lawsuits when they feel their vote is being diluted. Hundreds of these lawsuits have been successfully litigated in the Federal courts. In my prior life, I was a voting rights attorney in North Carolina. As a result of court ordered remedies, local jurisdictions have been required to create election districts that do not dilute minority voting strength. When I was in law school 32 years ago, there were virtually no black elected officials in my congressional district. Today, I count 302.

The Voting Rights Act also requires some jurisdictions to obtain Department of Justice pre-clearance to any change in election procedure. This, at first blush, may appear to be unfair to those jurisdictions, but the jurisdictions that are covered have a significant history of vote dilution and this requirement of pre-clearance simply assures that the jurisdiction does not intentionally or unintentionally make changes in their election procedures that will discriminate. This is called section 5. Section 5 has prevented many, many election changes that would have disenfranchised minority voters. It serves a useful purpose and should be extended.

A short story, Madam Speaker, and then I will close. In 1953 in my hometown of Wilson, NC, the African-American community worked very hard to teach the literacy test and qualify black citizens to vote. They then organized and elected an African American to the city council in a district with a large concentration of black voters. That was big news. When it was time

for reelection in 1957, the city council, arbitrarily and without notice or debate, changed the election system from district voting to at-large voting which resulted in the submerging of black voters. The change also required voters to vote for all city council seats on the ballot. If not, the ballot was considered spoiled. It was called the "vote for six rule."

Needless to say, that candidate, Dr. G.K. Butterfield, was handily defeated. If section 5 had been in place in 1957, this jurisdiction would not have been able to implement the changes and this community would have continued to have representation.

Madam Speaker, we have made tremendous progress in this country with respect to civil rights and voting rights. We must not turn back. I urge my colleagues on Thursday to vote for another 25-year extension of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and require covered jurisdictions to get the Department of Justice to analyze the voting change to determine if it will have the effect of diluting minority voting strength.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend J. Cletus Kiley, President, The Faith & Politics Institute, Washington D.C., offered the following prayer:

O God, we bow our heads humbly, gathered in this hallowed Chamber at the beginning of a new day. Here, in this place, our faith and our politics meet. Our work is about the just ordering of our society. And so at the beginning of this day we beg a portion of Your spirit that we might fully understand the authentic requirements that such a just society demands.

We beg a fuller portion of Your spirit to strengthen us so that our work is always at the service of love, and thus, in the face of human suffering, we may become a consolation; where there is isolation, we may become community; where there is need, we may become abundance; where there is threat, we may become strength.

Today, O God, stretch us beyond our personal limits that we might fulfill Your divine plan and may serve the common good of our people. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KUCINICH led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

DEMOCRATS HAVE A LACKLUSTER RECORD ON BORDER SECURITY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, House Democrats have been talking a lot about their agenda lately, but each and every time they fail to mention border security or immigration reform, and I suppose for good reason. With their lackluster record on immigration reform, I can understand why they hesitate to bring up the issue.

After all, Republicans voted to pass a border security bill in December, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill. Republicans voted to pass the REAL ID Act to make sure people who receive driver's licenses are here legally, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the bill.

Republicans wanted to allow members of our Armed Forces to help perform certain border security protection functions, but Democrats, led by their minority leader, opposed the amendment.

With a record like this, it is no wonder that the Democrats never mention border security as a part of their agenda.

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago today, on July 11, I introduced legislation to create a Cabinet-level Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which would employ the principles taught by Christ, Gandhi, Dr. King, Mother Teresa and others to create a new hope for violence-free homes, schools and communities through peace and character education, a new hope that through peace education we can even challenge the notion of the inevitability of war.

Today, thanks to hundreds of community groups, led by The Peace Alliance, momentum is building. Fifteen

cities have passed resolutions endorsing a Department of Peace, and 74 Members of the House have signed on to the bill. More and more, Americans want a compassionate, focused, organized approach to dealing with the violence in our communities, to dealing with domestic violence, spousal abuse, child abuse and other types of violence. The Department of Peace represents the end of fear and the beginning of hope for a new Nation and a new world.

OUR BATTLE FOR THE BORDER

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, more news from the front. Our battle for the border continues, and so does the hypocrisy from El Presidente Generalissimo Fox. So intent on tearing down American barriers, he is more intent on building his own, and he has taken millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to do it.

For years, Fox has taken American money as part of Operation BusBound, a joint U.S.-Mexican venture, to send illegal immigrants coming from Central America, going to Fox's southern border, and he wants to send them back home. But he wails when we, the United States, use our own money for our own southern borders, securing it with our troops who aren't even carrying weapons.

However, Guatemalans, trying to illegally enter Mexico, just trying to take jobs Mexicans won't do, are reportedly met at the border with machete-wielding farmers and armed Mexican military. The old sly Fox is trying to protect his hen house while continuing to illegally enter ours.

Why is the United States helping to protect the borders of other Nations while lacking the moral will to protect our own? This ought not to be, but, Mr. Speaker, that is just the way it is.

MINIMUM WAGE AND RISING PRICES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, over the last 9 years gas prices have doubled; college prices are up 38 percent; food prices, up 20 percent; housing, up 25 percent; and health care costs, up a whopping 75 percent. But the minimum wage hasn't budged over that period of time.

Over the last 5 years, we have had a singular focus in this House on raising revenue for those families for whom these numbers really don't mean much, because they have so much disposable income. But for people on the minimum wage, it means they have to decide between putting food on the table or insuring their own children. They have to work a week just to fill their tank with gas.

That's not right, and isn't it time that the Republican Party stop block-

ing the Democrat's attempts to raise the minimum wage and recognize that it is the working class families who are providing the underpinning of this economy? Let's increase the minimum wage. It is the right thing to do.

BORDER SECURITY

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of my friend from Virginia, and perhaps at a later time, he can elaborate on what he said at a town hall meeting recently where he was quoted as saying he looked forward to earmarking the heck out of future spending bills, should his party take control.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to talk about the border security hearings we held last week in California and Texas. I attended the hearing in California and noted with interest the comments of Sheriff Rick Flores of Webb County, Texas, who said in response to our questions that the first goal of this government, and our first priority, should be enforcement of the law and enforcement of our borders.

Mr. Speaker, that is a clear message. The American people likewise want to see enforcement first, no tricks, no triggers, no amnesty, enforcing existing laws and closing loopholes to reaffirm that our great Republic is, in fact, a nation of laws.

RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT THE ECONOMY

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, in July of 2001, a few months after President Bush took office, gas was \$1.33 a gallon. Five years later, July 2006, it has more than doubled to \$3.00, and in places like Chicago, it is as high as \$3.40 a gallon.

But this is not the only place where the administration has failed middle-class families. Since 2000, the cost of health care has increased 73 percent to \$11,000 for a family of four. The cost of tuition at a 4-year public college has increased 38 percent since 2001 and, at the same time, average weekly earnings have declined by 1 percent in America.

So while costs spiral out of control, middle-class families have less money in their pockets. That is not exactly what I would call a record of achievement. Yet today, the President said the economy is strong and getting stronger. The American people know that such statements are wrong and getting wronger. The President's statements show how out of touch he is with the struggles and challenges American families face today.

Mr. Speaker, all is not well on Main Street. It is high time that Washington and this Congress took action. It is

time for a new direction. It is time for a change.

SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL RESTRICTS POLICE

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Times reported today that a Senate immigration bill, the Kennedy bill, would prohibit State and local police from helping Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials combat illegal immigration. The Senate bill bars State and local police from detaining aliens simply for being in the U.S. illegally. Police could arrest the aliens only if they commit certain additional violations of Federal immigration law.

So the Senate bill wants to base our national security on get-out-of-jail-free cards and second chances? Let me remind you, Mr. Speaker, that four of the September 11 hijackers committed immigration violations and had been stopped by State and local police before the attacks on our Nation. Just 2 days before September 11, one hijacker, who had overstayed his visa, was stopped and given a \$270 speeding ticket. That was later found in his rented car in the Newark airport just a couple of days after September 11.

Mr. Speaker, those who don't learn from their mistakes are destined to repeat them. The Kennedy bill in the Senate does just that.

EYE-POPPING FIGURES FOR EXTENDING MEDICARE PART D ENROLLMENT

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, eye-popping figures in the new GAO report just made the case for extending the Medicare part D enrollment deadline a great deal more compelling.

Exhibit A, insurance providers failed to answer phone calls accurately in response to 70 percent of the questions asked by seniors about their benefit.

Exhibit B, call centers underestimated out-of-pocket costs seniors have to pay by thousands of dollars.

Exhibit C, like the insurance providers, Medicare operators often answered questions incorrectly according to an earlier GAO report.

You would figure the extra \$400 billion added to the initial price tag of the Medicare bill that the CMS actuaries didn't want to tell us about would at least buy seniors some peace of mind. Instead, part D continues to confuse and frustrate the seniors who, through no fault of their own, have a 3-in-10 chance of receiving the right information about their options.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to help extend the enrollment deadline, repeal the sign-up